

Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2016 - Volume 5, Issue 3

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HMTTP Grant Updates

Welcome Shannon



Shannon Stevens is the new Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program Coordinator. Her first day was July 11th. Shannon is thrilled to have the opportunity to join the HMTTP team! After 12 years of direct student services in the pre-k-12 public school system, Shannon is eager to advocate for families as the new HMTTP coordinator. As a school counselor and educator, Shannon has worked with a variety of students from all ages and developmental backgrounds to support and facilitate healthy personal growth. She has enjoyed the privilege of working with diverse students and families from the elementary school, middle school, high school, and college levels. Shannon has worked extensively with at-risk populations to successfully generate a web of support and various safety nets for families living in transition, poverty, foster care or with mental illness and drug addiction. She greatly enjoys opportunities to

engage the community and teach parents, faculty members, mentors, and business partners a variety of topics to nurture a sense of shared responsibility for youth and families. Shannon is thankful for these meaningful experiences and how she has grown both personally and professionally from them and eagerly anticipates the opportunity to work with and advocate for the community as the Healthy Teen Parent Program Coordinator.

Year 4 Budgets

Budgets and work plans for the final year (August 1, 2016-July 31, 2017) of the current HMTTP grant were due June 15, 2016. Budgets are being reviewed and feedback and next steps will be sent out via email by late July/early August. Once federal approval is received for Year 4, the contract amendment process will begin.

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Early Childhood Services Bureau Updates

Best Beginnings Scholarship Policy Changes

The Best Beginnings Scholarships for child care assistance have been undergoing some policy changes. Below you will see policy changes that will benefit parents and child care providers.

Twelve month eligibility

Each family who receives child care assistance through the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program will be considered to meet all eligibility requirements for a minimum of 12 months before eligibility is re-determined. The eligibility period is regardless of a temporary change in the ongoing status of the child's parent as working, or attending a job training or educational program, or a change in family income. The only exceptions at this time include Child Protective Services and TANF referrals.

Grace Period – Job Loss

The purpose of Grace Period is to support the parent's effort to look for work while maintaining continuity of care for the child/children and to stabilize the relationship with the child care provider. The Grace Period allows the current Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship to continue for 90 calendar days following the job loss, based on the date the employment loss occurred. Continuation of the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program is contingent upon the parent obtaining employment by the end of the awarded grace period.

Absence Policy

Absent Days are a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship benefit provided to the parent who is responsible for paying their child care provider when a child is temporarily absent from full-time care in a licensed or registered child care facility.

Explained absence means that parent has stated or notified the provider why the child is not in care; for example: a sick child or the family is on vacation. Absence days may also be used for holidays if the child care provider is open but the child does not attend. Unexplained absences means the child care provider does not know why the child is absent from care. The parent did not notify the provider as to why the child is absent. Part-time child care authorizations and corresponding certification plans do not qualify for this benefit. The total number of days covered in a twelve month period is 24.

Educational Activities

In addition to qualifying for participation for child care assistance in the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program through employment, families may receive child care assistance while one or both parents are full-time students. Families are not required to also meet a work activity requirement.

Graduated Phase Out

Graduated Phase Out continues eligibility for families that may be deemed over-income for the Non-TANF program of the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. Graduated Phase Out is continued eligibility up to 200% of the federal poverty level used by the state. The only difference between Non-TANF and graduated phase-out is in income level. Families must already be participating in the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program to qualify. Family income must not exceed 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size.

Homeless Families - 90 day Presumptive Eligibility

The definition for "homeless" comes from the McKinney-Vento Act and is broadly classified as: 1) Individuals lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; 2) Children sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; 3) Children living in motel, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative

adequate accommodations; 4) Children living in emergency or transitional shelters; 5) Children living in cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and 6) migratory children. A parent that reports the family as homeless will be eligible for the following: 90 days of eligibility to aid in the establishment of care for their children; a copayment of \$10.00; an exemption of the residency requirement until the family establishes a permanent address; and a conditional immunization certificate as needed.

Market Rate Survey

Montana has contracted with Montana State University to conduct a statistically valid and reliable survey of all child care providers in Montana to ascertain rates that they charge families for child care services. The goal of the survey is to identify market rates geographically and to determine provider reimbursements rates for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program.

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Hot Topics

Tools for Healthier Pregnancies

A provider training resource developed by several HHS offices, [Healthier Pregnancies: Tools and Techniques to Best Provide Affordable Care Act Covered Preventive Services](#), addresses ways to implement the [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendations](#) around obesity, alcohol, depression, intimate partner violence, tobacco, and breastfeeding in pre- and perinatal care settings. The initiative also aims to increase understanding and implementation of trauma-informed care.

KIDS COUNT 2016 data book is out!

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2016 KIDS COUNT Data Book finds that more of today's youth are healthier and completing high school on time, despite mounting economic inequality and increasingly unaffordable college tuition. This year, the annual report focuses on key trends in child well-being in the post-recession years, and offers recommendations for policymakers. Child Trends is pleased to partner with KIDS COUNT to analyze and communicate data about children and youth. [Read more](#)

New OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund Resources on Young Fathers

The HHS Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) Pregnancy Assistance Fund just released five new resources to help programs reach and engage more young fathers; influence research, practice, and policy to better address young fathers' needs; and improve the lives of young fathers and their families. These resources (listed below) are now available on the OAH [website](#).

- Young Fathers: Important Things to Know and How they Make a Difference
- Recruiting Young Fathers: Five Things to Know
- Retaining Young Fathers: Five Things to Know
- Young Fathers: A Workbook of Activities
- Young Fathers: An Assessment and Checklist for Grantee Organizations

New Findings from HHS TPP Evidence Review

The [HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review](#) has released findings from the fourth round of review. [Read and review the findings here](#). Seven new program models have been added to the review, including four funded by OAH (Healthy Futures; Love Notes; Positive Potential Be the Exception, 6th grade; and Positive Prevention PLUS). In addition to the seven new program models, the fourth update to the review identified additional evidence for seven program models that were already part of the review, including six funded by OAH (Children's Aid Society - Carrera; ¡Cuidate!; It's Your Game...Keep it Real; Reducing the Risk; Safer Sex; and Teen Outreach Program).

New Findings on Contraceptive Use Among Female Adolescents: Implications for STI Prevention

A [new study](#) published in The Journal of the American Medical Association found that U.S. female high school students using long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) methods "were about 60% less likely to use condoms" compared with those using oral contraceptives. The article discusses implications for adolescent reproductive health among LARC users, including the need to incorporate messages about condom use for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

How Does Talking to Extended Family Influence Teens' Decisions About Sex?

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth: A recent study finds that sexually active teens are more likely to have discussed sex and relationships with their extended family than with their parents. Read about the biggest takeaways [for youth programming in this research brief](#).

Society for Support to Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Founded in 1985, the [Society for Support to Pregnant and Parenting Teens](#) is a program that is engaged in the development and delivery of flexible, child-centered, family-focused, and community-based preventative services. The Pregnant and Parenting Teen Program provides information and support to pregnant and parenting teens in order to promote a healthy pregnancy, facilitate healthy decision-making, maximize opportunities for education and/or training, gain knowledge of and access to community resources, and to foster the development of individual strengths and independence.

The Society for Support to Pregnant and Parenting Teens offers an extensive range of services that include doula services, transportation, Child Safe first aid, drop in childcare, a wide variety of support groups, counseling, continued education, and prenatal and postnatal care. Each individual who enters the program is assigned a Family Support Worker who is committed to helping navigate community resources, providing information, and sharing knowledge and skills that will help meet an individual's specific goals.

Research on Teen Pregnancy Prevention.

The U.S. teen birth rate has declined by over 40 percent since 2006, according to a [CDC report](#) released last week. Child Trends has done substantial [work on teen pregnancy prevention](#), most recently through our supportive role to the [U.S. HHS Office of Adolescent Health \(OAH\)](#) since the office was funded in 2010.

CDC: No Product Label Change on Emergency Contraception

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a review of data on the efficacy of emergency contraception (EC) and body weight, concluding the data are insufficient to warrant a product label change. According to the announcement, the data are too limited and conflicting to conclude whether effectiveness of EC is reduced in women who weigh more than 165 pounds or have a body mass index of 25 kg/m² or higher. [More information about the FDA review can be found here.](#)

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Upcoming Events and Trainings

August

Healthy Relationships Training of Trainers

August 16-18, 2016

Billings, MT

[Learn more](#)

Great Beginnings, Great Families Conference

August 23-25, 2016

Helena, MT

[Learn more](#)

November

Healthy Teen Network 37th Annual National Conference: Roles, Relationships & Relevance in the Changing Landscape of Adolescent Health

November 14-16, 2016

Las Vegas, NV

[More information](#)

December

Zero to Three Annual Conference (National Training Conference): Connecting Science, Practice, and Policy

December 7-9, 2016

New Orleans, LA

[For more information](#)

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Webinars

Cultural Awareness and Knowledge are Fundamental to Serving U.S. Children and Families

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) recently hosted the second webinar in its series, [Enhancing the Cultural Responsiveness of Social Services](#). Over 50 federal employees, state and territory administrators, and technical assistance providers participated. They discussed strategies for fostering cultural awareness and knowledge as a way to improve services for diverse children and families.

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Got Newsletter Topics?

- Do you have a topic, an event, or a training you would like to include in the next newsletter?
- Would you like to be added to the mailing list?

Contact Shannon Stevens at smstevens@mt.gov.

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